

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Peter's Episcopal Church other _____
names/site number VDHR Number 096-0045

2. Location

street & number Intersection of Routes 3 and 205 not for publication
city or town Oak Grove vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Westmoreland code 193 Zip 22443

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official	Date
----------------------------------	------

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official	Date
---	------

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register

Signature of Keeper

See continuation sheet.

_____ determined eligible for the
National Register

Date of Action

See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Westmoreland County, VA

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

[illegible]

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

**U. S. Department of the Interior
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St. Peter's Episcopal Church
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Architecture

Period of Significance 1848-1883

Significant Dates 1848-49
1860
1882-83

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Robert Cary Long, Jr.
Dr. William Wirt
Norris & Garner, Builders and Contractors

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

____ previously listed in the National Register

_____ previously determined eligible by the National Register

_____ designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

X State Historic Preservation Office

____ Other State agency

____ Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1 18 325180E 4227683N	2 _____
3	4

**U. S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Oak Grove, VA**

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Frank and Anita Churchill with assistance from Mary C. Taylor

Organization: _____ date June 30, 2003

street & number: P.O. Box 71 telephone 840/663-3507

city or town Dahlgren state VA zip code 22448

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Congregation and Trustees of St. Peter's Episcopal Church

street & number P.O. Box 177 telephone 804/493-8285

city or town Montross state VA zip code 22520

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Westmoreland County, VA**

Narrative Description

Summary

St. Peter's Episcopal Church is a Gothic Revival structure located at the intersection of Rts. 3 and 205 in Westmoreland County, Virginia. Since its construction in 1848-49, St. Peter's has been in continuous use as an Episcopal Church. The original brick church with its brick foundation and tin alloy roof includes the vestibule and sanctuary of St. Peter's church. The church was built and consecrated in 1848-49. The addition to the rear of the church was added to include a vestry room and receipt in 1860. It was at this time that the Angus Dei stained glass window was added and the altering of the pulpits and chancel to its present form was completed, all from plans drawn by Dr. William Wirt. The present exposed cross-beamed ceiling and roof were constructed in 1882-83. Stained glass windows were also installed and the two doors opening from the vestibule to two aisles in the nave were changed to the present single entry door and center aisle. This formed a Gothic gable front with finished moldings and brackets. Norris & Garner, builders and contractors from St. Mary's County, Maryland performed this work on the church.

Detailed Exterior Description

St. Peter's Episcopal Church is a brick Gothic Revival structure. The southwest gable end features Flemish bond brick, and a central gothic arched entryway with arched sidelights. Above the entryway appears a large pointed arch window topped with a wooden drip mold. All of these windows feature a diamond pane design. Exposed brackets appear in the open rake between the roof and the wall. Leading to this main door are two brick steps with wrought iron railings.

The northwest façade is covered with a five-course brick bond and features two stained glass two over two double-hung sash windows with a diamond design. Each window has two exterior wooden shutters. The southeast façade of the original church is very similar to that of the northwest with two double stained glass windows flanked with exterior wooden shutters. It also features a five-course brick bond. There is evidence of a former chimney on this side. This brick chimney was not an original part of the church building. It was added in the late 19th or early 20th century. A large wood-burning stove was hooked to it until the 1930's when it was replaced by an oil-burning stove. In the 1940's a central oil furnace with forced hot air replaced the stove. The chimney was taken

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down in the early 1970s.

To the rear of the southeast façade is an addition completed in 1959. This addition features a six-course brick bond. The southwest façade contains two six over six double-hung sash windows flanked with wooden exterior shutters and a twelve-pane door. Leading to the door are four concrete steps with wrought iron railings. The eastern façade of the addition contains three six over six double hung sash windows with one being slightly larger than the other two.

Projecting from the northeast side of the original church building is a series of additions. The first was constructed in 1860 to house a vestry room and recept. This is a brick construction and features two six over six double hung sash windows in the northwest façade, which are topped with jack arches. The southeast side opens into the 1959 addition as does the north side. There is also a Sunday school addition, constructed in 1991, which features a five-course brick bond to the northeast of the sanctuary. This addition contains four brick pillars on the east façade as well as one set of double glass doors and two sets of full-length double windows. This side is constructed of brick and covered by white stucco. The west façade is broken by four one over one double-hung sash windows.

Detailed Interior Description

The interior of the original portion of St. Peter's Episcopal Church exhibits great beauty with the simplicity of its design. Norris and Garner, builders and contractors from St. Mary's County, Maryland constructed the current exposed cross-beamed ceiling and roof in 1882-83. During this reconstruction the double stained glass windows were added and the two doors opening from the vestibule into the two aisles in the nave were changed to the current single entryway and aisle. Within the sanctuary, the walls are covered in white plaster, which is only broken by the four double stained glass windows and decorated with simple marble tablets. The double stained glass windows are topped with wooden drip molds. There is a seating balcony at the southwest end of the sanctuary, which is accessed by a steep staircase in the vestibule. The wooden pews face the northeast end of the sanctuary where a simple wooden altar is located within a rounded arched recess. Located above the altar is a single round Angus Dei stained glass window added in 1860.

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A wooden gothic railing surrounds the pulpits and chancel. This railing is stained wood on the railing with the supports being painted white.

The Parish Hall, completed in 1957 is finished with painted wallboard, hardwood oak floors and colonial style window moldings. This addition accommodates social functions in its single large rectangular meeting room to the west of the entrance, a kitchen to the north and a restroom to the east.

The Sunday School wing, added in 1991, features a long corridor going down the east side of the structure with two sets of windows and one double glass door overlooking the grounds. To the west of the corridor there are four classrooms and one restroom.

The interiors of St. Peter's church and parish wing were completely renovated to add a new heating and air conditioning system, insulated and painted in 1978-79. These changes did not deter from the original integrity of the church, nor did they alter the interior layout.

Outbuilding and Tombstone Site

In addition to the main structure on the property there is also a small wood frame white building. This single room contributing structure is located to the northeast of the Parish hall. It was moved to this location from the 1850's rectory, which was two miles away, to be used as a Sunday school room before the Parish hall was built. It was the Rector's study and library in the past and has once again been furnished as such. This consists of one room with electricity, but no plumbing. To the west of the church are several old tombstones that have been collected from neglected and destroyed parish cemeteries. It is not a cemetery as there are no graves under them. The stones date from 1754 through the 1800's.

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Statement of Significance

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**St. Peter's Episcopal Church
Westmoreland County, VA**

St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Westmoreland County was consecrated in 1849 as the first Episcopal Church in Washington Parish since the church's disestablishment following the Revolutionary War.

In 1860, a small addition was completed on the northeast side of the church to house a vestry room and receipt area. An Angus Dei stained glass window was also added at this time above the altar. Originally constructed with a low pitch roof, the building was restructured in 1882-83 with Gothic Revival elements being added such as pointed arch stained glass windows and a new gable roof with an exposed beam ceiling. The two side aisles were also removed as were the two doors leading into the sanctuary from the vestibule and a single center door and aisle were created at this time. Since this last major remodeling of the original structure there have been multiple non-historic additions to the building and modern air conditioning and heating added. These alterations, however, do not deter from the integrity of historic sanctuary and vestibule. This area has retained much of its original fabric including the pine flooring, wood window moldings and ceiling beams. St. Peter's Episcopal Church is significant under criteria C for its remarkable gothic revival architecture.

Historical Background

St. Peter's Episcopal Church falls within the boundaries of Washington Parish in Westmoreland County, Virginia. Organized in 1661, John Washington, Great-grandfather to George Washington and James Monroe, great-great-grandfather to the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, were among the founding vestrymen for the parish. Originally known as Appomattox Parish, the name was changed to Washington in honor of Colonel John Washington, thus becoming the first geographical division in American to be named Washington.¹

The Reverend Archibald Campbell, a Scotsman, became rector of the Washington Parish in 1744, serving for thirty years until his death in 1774. He ran a school at his home and it was here that he tutored the future Chief Justice of the United States, John Marshall, in the same classroom with the future President, James Monroe.²

Not only has this parish the unique honor of having two United States presidents born within its bounds, but also the famous Lee family of Stratford Hall was worshippers in the parish at Old Pope's Creek Church, which burned about 1828 and which was succeeded by the present St. Peter's

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Church.³

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Also, within the present parish boundaries, the illustrious Richard Henry Lee drafted the famous Leedstown Resolutions, which were signed by 115 local patriots at Leedstown on February 27, 1766, thereby becoming the first declaration of independence, antedating the national Declaration of Independence by more than ten years.⁴

After the Revolutionary War, when the Episcopal Church was disestablished, many parishes in Virginia fell on hard times. Pope's Creek, built in 1744, not far from Oak Grove, and Bray's Church at Leedstown were seized when the congregations stopped using them about 1805.⁵ Since these churches were considered to be free churches to any denomination, the result was that no denomination would make repairs. Consequently they fell into disrepair and disappeared.

The Reverend William McGuire became the rector of Washington Parish in 1847. He reported to the Diocesan Convention of 1848, that there was no Episcopal Church edifice in the parish. Happily, the next year, his report stated, "A commodious and excellent brick church has been completed at Oak Grove in this parish, and it is now ready for consecration."⁶

The "Commodious edifice" was St. Peter's and prime movers in its construction were two vestrymen, William Wirt, M.D., and John E. Wilson. Other vestrymen at the time included George H. Lewis, Patrick Robb, M.D., Lawrence Washington and James Payne.

Criteria C: That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church was consecrated in 1849. It is a very early and important example of the Gothic Revival Style of architecture, not only one of the earliest in Virginia, but also in America. It is thought that St. Peter's Church may have been the work of the architect Robert Cary Long, Jr. (1810-1849) of Baltimore, who designed many Episcopal churches.⁷

St. Peter's saw its first renovations in 1860 when the Angus Dei stained glass window above the

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altar was installed. During this time an addition was built on the northeast side to accommodate a receipt and vestry room. In 1882-83, the church underwent several alterations with the most significant being the restructuring of the roof. The original low pitch roof was leaking and causing

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the sidewalls to bulge thereby warranting the building of a steeper gable roof, raising the end walls and lowering the sidewalls. This along with the addition of pointed arched stained glass windows from Baltimore's Gernhardt Studios produced the gothic gable front visible today. The southwest façade acts as the entrance to the church and features Flemish bond brick and a central pointed arch entryway with similar sidelights. A large pointed arch stained glass window tops the entryway. Stained glass windows were also added to the sidewalls. The interior of the sanctuary now featured a high peaked ceiling with exposed heavy wooden trusses and beams. The walls remained simple and were only covered in white plaster. The sanctuary was reconfigured from the original two-aisle design to the present arrangement with a single center aisle. The sanctuary features its original wooden pews, wide plank pine flooring and wood framing that dates to the renovations completed in 1882/3.⁸

Also of note are the remnants of Confederate and Union soldiers who camped nearby in 1861 and 1862 and left their inscriptions on the walls of a broom closet in the vestibule. The inscriptions include the names and companies of the soldiers. There were more inscriptions throughout the building that were uncovered during upkeep in the 1930's. However, they were all painted over. Though innumerable gifts have been bestowed to St. Peter's since it's founding, several seem to have particular significance including the beautiful six-piece sterling communion service and the hand made organ. In 1868, James W. Robins, from Atlantic City, N. J., wrote to the Reverend Thomas E. Locke of his intention to forward a Communion Service consisting of six pieces, a flagon, a paten, two cups and two plates, as a thanks offering for the recovery of "one of our children from a dangerous illness." St. Peter's was chosen because Mrs. Robins had a very warm attachment to the "Old Dominion" after having spent many of her early years in Virginia. A vestry resolution of April 3, 1869, thanked Mr. Robins for the "handsome gift" which is used to this day.⁹

Betty Payne Wirt, wife of Dr. William Wirt of "Wirtland", presented the handsome, rare, Henry Erben organ to St. Peter's in 1854. An English cabinetmaker, Jezebell Horner was hired to install the organ in the balcony. It was moved to its present location and electrified in 1934. After 120 years of service the 250-pipe instrument was disassembled in 1974, rebuilt and restored to its

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original condition.¹⁰

St. Peter's Episcopal Church retains a majority of its original fabric despite having multiple additions to the building. These additions all stem from the earliest one in 1860 and do not take

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away from the historic integrity of the original sanctuary and vestibule area. The interior of the church remains much today as it did upon completion of renovations in 1882/3. Since then the only modification to the main church was the addition of modern heating and air conditioning in 1978/9. St. Peter's Episcopal Church is significant for its architectural integrity under criteria C.

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Endnotes

¹ Westmoreland County Records, County Clerk's Office, Westmoreland County, Virginia.

² The Right Reverend William Meade, "Old Churches & Families of Virginia, Vol. II," 158-159.

³ Ibid.: 159.

⁴ Ibid.: 434-435.

⁵ Don W. Massey, "The Episcopal Churches In The Diocese of Virginia," (Diocese Church Histories-Keswick, Virginia, 1989): 135.

⁶ James Scott Rawlings, "Virginia's Colonial Churches," (Garrett & Massey-Richmond, Virginia, 1963)

⁷ Letter to St. Peters from: James T. Wollen, Jr., dated 9 September 1996.

⁸ *The St. Mary's Beacon*, 31 May 1883, v. 20:38, p 3, c 1.

⁹ St. Peter's Vestry Minutes ref: April 3, 1869.

¹⁰ St. Peter's Vestry Minutes ref: 1854.

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Bibliography

Eubank, Ragland. "Historic Northern Neck of Virginia." 1934.

Massey, Don W.. "The Episcopal Churches In the Diocese of Virginia." Diocese of Church Histories, Keswick, Virginia, 1989.

Meade, William. "Old Churches and Families of Virginia." 1838.

Rawlings, James Scott. "Virginia's Colonial Churches." Garrett & Massey, Richmond, Virginia, 1963.

Northern Neck News, July 25, 1985. Dedication of the Washington Parish Marble Plaque.

The St. Mary's Beacon, 31 May 1883, v. 20:38, p 3, c 1.

St. Peter's Vestry Minutes ref: April 3, 1869.

St. Peter's Vestry Minutes ref: 1854.

Westmoreland County Records, County Clerk's Office, Westmoreland County, Virginia

Letters to St. Peter's Episcopal Church from James T. Wollen, Jr. dated 9 September 1996 and 27 September 1996, in Church Records.

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Verbal Boundary Description

As you enter the driveway of St. Peter's Episcopal Church from Rt. 3, there is a large oak on your right as you enter the driveway from Rt. 3, it could also be referred to as the east side of the driveway. There are various trees and a crude fence going north towards the Parish House. Near the Parish House a trench is visible along the property line. One can follow this trench from the east side of the Parish House, northwest until you see another marker in the ground directly behind the Sunday School addition. From this marker you go along the west side of the Sunday School addition and the church following a grove of trees to another marker at an oak tree on the southwest end of the property along route 3.

Boundary Justification

The boundary chosen for the nomination encompasses the land historically associated with the church. The original tract of land was bounded by several other plots, which have been purchased by the church in order to maintain the historic view shed.

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Photograph Key

Frank F. Churchill took the following photographs in January 2003. All negatives are stored at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Virginia. Pictures 1 and 3 are filed under negative number 20647. Pictures 2, 4, 5, and 6 are filed under negative number 20646. Pictures 7, 8, 9, and 10 are filed under negative number 20645.

1. Exterior, Looking North
2. Exterior, Looking North
3. Exterior, Looking Northeast
4. Exterior, Looking Southwest
5. Exterior, Looking North
6. Exterior, Rector's Library
7. Interior, Altar in Sanctuary with Angus Dei Window
8. Interior, Stained Glass Windows
9. Interior, Door to Vestibule with Balcony Above
10. Interior, Henry Erben Organ